Atkinson, Joseph E 1919-1920 (022)

October 15th, 1919

J. F. Atkinson, Esq.,
Editor, "The Star",
Toronto.

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

You were kind enough to say last week that you would be willing to give advice or assistance to our Committee on the University War Memorial. One of the questions that comes up is as to the way in which we should handle our publicity, what kind of publicity we should undertake and how.

Mr. Cassidy, who is a graduate of the University and has had a great deal of experience in various campaigns, is our organizer, and he would like to talk this matter over to you.

I am giving him this letter and perhaps you would be good enough to see him at a time that is convenient.

With kind regards and many thanks,

I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.

A Question for the University

The University of Toronto is a great seat of learning and a public institution in which the people of the city and Province feel some pride.

It is an institution specially concerned with the encouragement of learning and the advancement of science, and as such it receives large public subsidies, and as its work expands its needs in this respect grow annually larger.

In the last issue of THE STAR WEEKLY a special writer gives some account of a new discovery by a young Toronto scientist who has been doing research work, a graduate of the university, Dr. James H. Cotton. It appears that he has discovered a new form of anesthetic, so far superior to anything known before that it will be universally used in hospitals and elsewhere.

It has been stated that the discoverer wrote the University of Toronto reporting his success, asking that tests of it be made, and offering to place it and the fruits of it at the disposal of the university as a source of revenue either by direct manufacture or for disposal on a royalty basis to manufacturing chemists. At this time the war was on, the need of the world for an improved anesthetic was grievous. It is stated that to this offer Dr. Cotton received no reply; his offer was ignored, his alma mater evincing no interest in the scientific achievement nor in the proffered source of revenue. After waiting eight months for the sign of interest that he expected from his university it is said that Dr. Cotton took other action to place his new anesthetic before the world, and it is now being produced by the Du Ponts, one of the great chemical manufacturing firms of the United States.

This is an important matter and requires clearing up. The interest of the University of Toronto in scientific achievement ought to be, and often is, keen. In this instance, what explanation is there for its indifference? Is the new anesthetic one of great importance? If so, science will accept and use it. If science everywhere but here accepts this discovery as of revolutionary importance how is Toronto and how is Ontario to account for the attitude of the university and its hospital authorities? Are the people to assume that the progress of learning and the advancement of science are but secondary considerations, and that successful research is ignored unless those who succeed belong to the favored circle of the elect and select?

Statements have been made in the American and local press in this matter which cannot be overlooked. The University of Toronto and the Toronto General Hospital have ignored this new anesthetic as if it were of no importance. Unless their defence is that they regard the new anesthetic as of no importance their attitude must be considered so remarkable as to call for Governmental investigation in the public interest.

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THE TORONTO DAILY STAR

THE STAR WEEKLY (SUNDAY EDITION)

JOSEPH E. ATKINSON, PRESIDENT

TORONTO

Dear Dean Clarke. Mr. Atkinson has sent me the enclosed proof of an article or the letter of which I send you a copy. I write that I did not believe there was anything in it but would ask you

February 16th 1920.

Sir Robert Falconer,
President,
University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Sir Robert,

The enclosed article has been submitted to me but I find it impossible to believe that the statements or implications do justice to the University. I think it only right therefore to inquire of you just what the facts are concerning this matter. May I trouble you to this extent.

I noticed in the papers that you were confined to your house for some days. I presume and hope you are again alright.

With kindest regards, believe me to be,

Yours very truly,

J E Atkinson

Dear Mr. Atkinson

As far as I remember no such offer was ever made to the University. I did not hear of Dr Tolton's discovery till last autumn. I will however at once take the matter up with Dean Clarke. Possibly Dr Tolton spoke to some member of the University Staff about it & may have been given the cold shoulder. But unless the Dean himself was approached & took this attitude, which I can hardly believe he would do, the University as such knows nothing about it.

Many thanks for letting me know about this. It was very kind of you. I cannot think that there is anything in it. Hope you have escaped the flu. Am still in bed.

R.A.F.

University of Toronto
PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

COPY.

The Toronto Daily Star.

February 16th, 1920

Sir Robert Falconer,
President,
University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Sir Robert,

The enclosed article has been submitted to me but I find it impossible to believe that the statements or implications do justice to the University. I think it only right therefore to inquire of you just what the facts are concerning this matter. May I trouble you to this extent.

I noticed in the papers that you were confined to your house for some days. I presume and hope you are again alright.

With kindest regards, believe me to be,
Yours very truly,

(Sgd.) J. E. Atkinson

February 17th, 1920

J. E. Atkinson, Esq.,
"The Toronto Daily Star",
Toronto.

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

As far as I remember no such offer was ever made to the University. I did not hear of Dr. Cotton's discovery till last autumn. I will, however, at once take the matter up with Dean C. K. Clarke. Possibly Dr. Cotton spoke to some member of the University Staff about it and may have been given the cold shoulder. But unless the Dean himself was approached and took this attitude, which I can hardly believe he would do, the University as such knows nothing about it.

Many thanks for letting me know about this. It was very kind of you, and I cannot think that there is anything in it.

Hope you have escaped the flu. As still in bed.

Yours sincerely,

President.

February 19th, 1920

J. S. Atkinson, Esq.,
The Star Printing Company,
Toronto.

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

I have just received Dr. Clarke's reply with regard to the statement of Dr. Cotton that the University and the Hospital refused to further his efforts in perfecting his anaesthetic. The extracts I enclose will I think prove that whoever is writing on behalf of Dr. Cotton is not putting the facts in the proper light. Dr. Clarke promises as you will see to write me further about the matter.

Again thanking you I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.

COPY.

9 College Street,
Feb. 18th, 1920

Dear President Falconer:

As a matter of fact, Dr. Cotton had the assistance of the University in all his experiments, and it was through me that his experiments were carried on in the Pathological Building, which is a University Building. He was given the use of a room in the basement, and although every kindness was shown him he does not seem to have appreciated it to the extent he should. Through all of his experiments we were at his back. I think if newspaper files were turned up they would show how much he was aided by me, and how lavishly I bestowed both time and attention to his experiments.

Without wishing to detract in any way from Dr. Cotton's so-called success, I would say that he never at any time succeeded in gaining the confidence of the anaesthetists, and although I have not seen any of them of late I am quite satisfied that even at the present moment they are very sceptical of his results.

The so-called offer to the Hospital and University was brought up at a Board Meeting, but there was no justification in going on with a matter which had not reached finality, and could not have the endorsation of the people most interested, namely, the anaesthetists. As you know, no physician is justified in commercializing an invention, and this was the reason Dr. Cotton gave for wishing the hospital to assume the business responsibility.

As far as the University is concerned it did everything it could to help the young man, and such an article as that appearing in the "Star" is not only unjustified, but does a very great wrong.

I have asked the Hospital to give me all the correspondence in the matter, and when I have looked it over I shall write you again.

I remain, Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) C. K. Clarke.

THE TORONTO DAILY STAR
THE STAR WEEKLY (SUNDAY EDITION)

JOSEPH E. ATKINSON, PRESIDENT

TORONTO

February 21st 1920.

Sir Robert Falconer,
President,
University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ont.

My dear Sir Robert,

I am obliged to you for your two letters and the copy of Dr Clarke's letter to you regarding statements attributed to Dr Cotton about the University and Hospital refusing to further his efforts. When Dr Clarke sends you the promised correspondence I shall be glad if you will forward me a copy of it.

Believe me to be,

Yours very truly,

H. Atkinson

March 5th, 1920

J. E. Atkinson, Esq.,
"The Star",
Toronto.

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

I have again had communication with Dean Clarke who unfortunately is unable to get from the Toronto General Hospital the correspondence which he thought was there with regard to the offer of Dr. J. B. Cotton of his new anaesthetic.

However, Dr. Clarke writes me that he has received from Dr. Cotton a letter stating that Dr. Clarke did all in his power to help him in the development of his work. Also, his recollection is that Dr. Cotton forwarded such a small amount of the material that there was never any satisfactory test made of it in the hospital or by the Military Authorities. This latter is for yourself and is confidential.

Dr. Clarke assures me that he did all in his power to give Dr. Cotton a chance, and he is of opinion that the anaesthetists did not judge the preparation from what they saw of it to be of such special value as it is now according to the Duponts who are advertising it very widely.

It would be difficult for the Toronto General Hospital to undertake the preparation in a business way of an anaesthetic. As for the University the only products that we are able to manufacture are the antitoxins which for some time we have been producing through the generosity of Colonel Gooderham, who has given a farm and build laboratories, as you are aware, some twelve miles north of the city.

Yours sincerely,

President.

THE TORONTO DAILY STAR
THE STAR WEEKLY (SUNDAY EDITION)

JOSEPH E. ATKINSON, PRESIDENT

TORONTO

March 17th 1920.

Sir Robert A.Falconer
University of Toronto,
Toronto, Ont.

My dear Sir Robert,

I beg to acknowledge your letter of the 5th instant which clears up the subject satisfactorily. Many thanks for the trouble you have taken.

Believe me to be,

Yours very truly,

J E Atkinson

June 29rd, 1920

J. E. Atkinson, Esq.,
"The Star",
Toronto.

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

I am glad that you have called my attention to the visit of the Editors of the leading newspapers of Great Britain and other parts of the Empire to the Imperial Press Conference, and I am sure that the University will be glad to offer honorary degrees to some of these delegates. Can you let me know when they are to be here ? Also, how we can divide the list so that McGill will give some and we may give others? We should not like to have only the leavings after McGill has made its choice. The Committee on Honorary Degrees is being called for next Wednesday to look into the matter. Perhaps you will have some suggestions that you can give me before the Committee meets.

With kind regards, I am,

Yours sincerely,

President.